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ABSTRACT

This practicum identified an inability of staff to facilitate play among students with diverse abilities in an inclusive preschool setting, and presented staff training projects to improve such facilitative skills. Because the staff lacked knowledge regarding play characteristics, functions, and categories needed to provide necessary interventions and formal play assessment, team-building management techniques were designed to develop a staff in-house training project, providing resources for on-going staff presentations over a period of 8 months. Staff selected their own working committees and topics from a preset list, and at the end of each presentation, offered suggestions for improving facilitation of play skills. After completing the project, the staff were able to identify the knowledge that was lacking, name at least three types of play assessment and use the Smilansky scale to assess play in the classroom, and prepare a position paper on play for use in further staff training and for disbursement among special educators, interns, and parents at the school. (Six appendices include a staff survey form, topics for staff training, session agendas for staff meetings, a position paper on play, and a checklist for play assessment. Contains 108 references.) (AP)

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Improving Skills to Facilitate Play in an Inclusive Preschool Setting Through a Collaborative Staff Self-Training Project

by

Merilyn R. Truxal

Cluster 50

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Improving Skills to Facilitate Play in an Inclusive Preschool Setting Through a Collaborative Staff Self-Training Project. Truxal, Merilyn R., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Play/Inclusion/Socialization/Cooperative Planning/Curriculum Design/Inservice Teacher Education/Workshops

This practicum identified an inability of staff to facilitate play among students with diverse abilities in an inclusive preschool setting. Staff lacked knowledge concerning play characteristics, functions, and categories to provide necessary interventions to facilitate play. Furthermore, the staff was unable to conduct formal play assessments. Using team building management techniques, the writer developed a staff in-house training project, providing resources for on-going staff presentations over a period of eight months.

Staff members chose their own working committees. Staff selected their own topics from among a preset list. The writer provided any needed technical assistance and helped individuals produce written agendas when necessary. At the end of each presentation, the writer logged any new suggestions for improving facilitation of play skills. The writer also led two workshops, on differences between early childhood education and special education backgrounds, and on play assessments.

Following the completion of the staff training project, the staff were able to successfully list characteristics, functions, and categories of play. Staff were able to name at least three types of play assessment. Staff members were able to use the Smilansky scale to assess play in the classroom. Together, the staff prepared a position paper on play to be used for further in-staff training and for disbursement among Intermediate Unit special educators, interns, and parents at the school.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

School Setting

The setting is a privately owned nursery-kindergarten and child care center in a small town in the Eastern section of the United States. Located in a cul-de-sac in a wooded, residential area, the 3000 square foot building was designed and built by the writer specifically to house the center.

Families may select a schedule ranging from a three-morning per week pre-school program to a full-day child care program. Sixty students are enrolled in the pre-school or kindergarten half or full day program. About 35 students are in the school-age component. Summer camp is also offered as an option for children ages 3-13.

The program has been licensed with the Department of Education as a preschool-kindergarten and with the Department of Welfare as a child care center since 1971. Accreditation with the National Academy of Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was completed in May, 1993.

The school has always been an inclusive setting, accepting children on a first-come first-served basis. However, educational practices during the 1980's dictated that children with more severe disabilities would be better served in smaller, isolated classrooms led by a special educator. In the past few years,

educators and families have been seeking a more natural community setting where children with a wide range of cultural, racial, physical, and cognitive diversities could attend an integrated preschool. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) have led administrators to begin searching for placements with the "least restrictive environment" for preschoolers with a wide range of disabilities (Rose & Smith, 1993).

Recently, the preschool entered into a subcontract with the local Intermediate Unit (IU) to reserve spaces for children with special needs who qualify for Early Intervention. Special educators such as developmental specialists, speech and language therapists, as well as occupational and physical therapists are provided by the IU as part-time consultants in the classroom. All students participate fully in the daily schedule. Teachers adapt lesson plans to meet the needs of each particular child, and provide adaptive equipment or assistance in the form of physical or verbal prompts as needed.

Staff Background

The school staff of 8 teachers have varied backgrounds. Two teachers have masters degrees in early education, one with certification in special education. Together the two teachers represent 19 years classroom teaching experience. Three teachers have bachelor degrees in early childhood education, psychology with early education emphasis or elementary education, with a combined 33 years teaching experience. Two assistant teachers have associate

degrees in early childhood education with a combined 6 years classroom experience. One new teacher recently graduated with an early childhood education degree.

The developmental consultant from the IU recently completed a masters degree with an emphasis in Early Intervention. The speech consultant is a state licensed speech, language, hearing pathologist with a masters equivalency. The licensed physical therapist has a bachelors degree and the occupational therapist assistant has an associate degree. All four teachers have many years experience. However, for all the IU staff, the experience at this preschool is the first to involve complete inclusion practices, since previous experiences have involved either pull-out programs or classrooms enrolling only children with disabilities.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Writer

The roles and responsibilities of the writer, as school founder, owner, and director, are varied. The writer's background includes a bachelors degree in music education, certification in Montessori, masters degree in child care administration, and 25 years field experience. The writer is currently completing the final year of study in an Ed.D. program in Child and Youth Studies (birth-18 years).

Approximately 50% of the writer's time is spent in staff development. Staff training for teachers takes place mostly during evening meetings. Individual or small team staff consultations, as well as orientation training for interns and volunteers, usually occur within the school hours. Modeling teaching techniques

are either formally set up during the school schedule or spontaneously occur according to the perceived needs of staff and children within the school day.

About 20% of the writer's time is spent working with family involvement issues. The wide range of needs addressed by the writer might include families consultations to prepare children for death of a relative, divorce, or birth of a sibling. Parents may request advice for dealing with specific learning problems of a physical, behavioral, or emotional nature. Attendance at a parent-teacher conference as a consultant for a specific problem may be required to help clarify issues for teachers and families. Coordinating financial concerns for parents might include providing information about government child care cost assistance, child care tax deductions through federal tax programs, or childcare deductions through payroll plans.

Time is also spent in related community involvement. Participation in community activities such as the Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) helps to provide timely information on workshops, transitions, and training sessions for Early Intervention. Presenting and attending workshops on the national, state, and local level help the writer to maintain professional growth and to build a professional national network.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The classroom teachers in the center were not able to adequately facilitate play in the widely diverse pre-school setting. Because of priorities toward redesigning group time goals and curriculum content to meet more diverse needs, staff training had not focused on the topic of facilitating free play or social interactions. A few staff members appeared to believe the role of the teacher during free play should be relatively non-interventive, more as a monitor than actual participator. Assuming that children know how to problem-solve peacefully and how to direct their own interactive play is unrealistic in any diverse population, but particularly so during early childhood years when all children tend to operate from an egocentric viewpoint (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). With the addition of more children with special needs in the classroom, strategies of non-intervention that may have seemed adequate in the past were no longer effective.

Because federal and state mandates pertaining to inclusive centers are relatively recent, information available for instruction in facilitating play in diverse preschool tends to be based more on theories, philosophies, and short-term research rather than practical strategies. Finding suitable models to adapt for a private, for-profit preschool was not an easy task.

Teachers need to be able to articulate school policy regarding free play to parents, many of whom cite socialization experiences as a priority for enrollment

at the center. Additionally, teachers must be able to articulate theoretical support for socialization practices to the IU consultants who come weekly to observe, to monitor, or to provide direct services.

A more formal method of free play assessment was needed since IEP's for children with special needs often list social progress components as long or short term goals. Children with special needs who are chronologically three years or older may be socializing at a much younger developmental stage. Staff lacked the ability to assess the wider range of play activities, making it difficult to communicate needs and progress of particular students in regard to free play activities.

Attention to the social aspect of an inclusion program is crucial. Staff members needed to expand basic knowledge of social interactions and functions of play to meet the diverse needs in an inclusive preschool setting.

Problem Documentation

A school survey (Appendix A) showed that the staff lacked sufficient knowledge of the theoretical framework of play to fully comprehend the value of social interactions during play. Staff members were encouraged to take home the survey, to look up references at home or at school, and to use any means except collaboration among staff to identify resources for characteristics, categories and functions of play. Only two out of eight staff members were able to list either three characteristics and only one could explain from where she derived play

practices and beliefs. Only three teachers were able to list three play categories (see Table 1).

Table 1

Results of 8 Staff Pre Surveys on Knowledge of Play Issues

Topic of Question		No Resource Given	Wrong Answer	Partial Answer	Adequate Answer
#1.	play characteristics	7	4	2	2
#2.	play categories	7	3	2	3
#3.	value of play (function)	NA	1	5	2
#4.	assessments	8	4	2	2
#5.	adult play	NA	0	6	2

While most preschool teachers realize that play is a valuable part of an early childhood curriculum, few may be able to verbalize the many benefits children derive from play (Nourot & Van Hoorn, 1991; Sapp, 1992). The survey showed that 6 out of 8 staff at the center were unable to identify the value (function) of play in the classroom to the extent necessary to explain it to outsiders.

The preschool survey also indicated a lack of staff knowledge of methods to assess play. Most of the staff wrote that observing children while playing with them would be a sufficient method of assessment. Only two staff members suggested use of any alternative assessments, such as anecdotal records, checklists, or video taping.

A review of videos randomly taped during free play throughout one month confirmed missed opportunities to facilitate play between children with and without special needs. The videos showed that staff members were engaged in interactions during free play. However, by watching for specific children, especially those with special needs, the viewer could see indications that the staff was not consistently providing interventions likely to increase social interactions for those children. By focusing on one child with special needs at a time, the viewer could observe that teachers personally interacted with the child, but did not often attempt to initiate peer interactions.

The video taping alerted the writer to another problem, later validated by direct classroom observation. In both wings of the school, the classroom inventory of dramatic play materials was disorganized. Despite attempts to label containers, to provide adequate wall pegs or hangers for dress-up clothes, and to provide cupboard space for dishes, the lack of organization of these materials made the area in both wings unappealing. Specific dramatic plays are unlikely to develop when children are unable to locate what they need.

Causative Analysis

The program had undergone fundamental changes in the recent past. Accreditation with the National Academy for Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, was received after the staff voluntarily spent 18 months in self-evaluation, leading to a gradual change in scope of program depth and to a different, broader approach

to multi-cultural effects in preschool settings. The process involved many staff meetings.

During the same period of time, the staff and the student body became more culturally, racially, and cognitively diverse. New teachers joined the staff with little opportunity to socialize with experienced staff members. At the same time, the presence of a more diverse student body meant less time in the daily schedule for staff to get to know each other personally.

The addition of the Early Intervention component increased the amount of paperwork and documentation needed. For example, by this time, checklists with comments were being sent home weekly, along with lesson plan adaptations and evaluations, to all families of children with special needs. Families have continually reported how useful this information is, both in learning how to work at home with children, and in knowing how to encourage verbalization of school activities at home. The documentation serves as the main intercommunication between classroom teachers, IU consultants, and families. However, the written process takes time, despite many refinements to streamline the information. Sometimes, teachers found it necessary to finish notes during free play in order to send the information home during the same week. Obviously, free play received less attention as a result.

Meanwhile, the wide diversity of abilities of students now attending the program necessitated a wider range of teachers skills and knowledge than were

previously needed in order to sustain free play. Techniques for problem-solving that seemed adequate in the past did not work in more challenging situations.

Managing the best use of time for the new preschool special educator hired by the writer was challenging. The best use of the IU consultants in the classroom was constantly being re-evaluated during the first year. For the IU consultants and the new special educator, staying for an extended period of time in developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) was a change from the more structured, behavior-modification pull-out setting typically used in segregated settings. Interacting with the same children for longer time periods was also a tempo change for most special educators.

Philosophical differences between early childhood educators and special educators, especially pertaining to behavior modification issues, task analysis, and play assessments created a problem currently debated between early educators and special educators.. An ideology based on free play with little adult intrusiveness to inhibit children's spontaneity has been prevalent in preschool during the recent past (Bruner, 1983). Special educators, on the other hand, are used to being intrusive, since their time is usually "pulled out" of the regular school day. Also, special educators are accustomed to assessing progress by measurable outcomes during a measurable time period. In other words, special educators traditionally have expected results on demand. The two domains have inherent differences in approach to children. "The compatibility of addressing specific intervention targets or outcomes that appear on Individual Education

Plans (IEPs) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) within an approach that advocates child-initiated activities is often viewed as problematic" (Sexton & Snyder, 1994, p. 42). Putting together both frameworks into a consistent school policy has required frequent adjustments.

In the past two years, the staff that previously had included only teachers with a minimum of a four year degree, expanded to include some assistant teachers with associate degrees in early childhood education. The framework of these teachers was somewhat different from the others because such training tends to include more practice than policy and theory, even though the practice may be very appropriate. Teachers from this background had the most difficult time adjusting to special education practices.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Much research has been conducted pertaining to the value of various types of play in the preschool, and to the role of the teacher in facilitating play. A search through the literature identified several characteristics of play (classes of concepts), categories of play (distinctive qualities) and functions of play (purpose).

Characteristics of play include a total commitment toward a particular end, a feeling of energy and lack of self-consciousness, a sense of order, and joy (Neugebauer, 1993).

> Spontaneous creative play relaxes us and focuses our attention, so that we can experience our own creativity. In the same way as children engage in the reverie of spontaneous play, we-as adults-rediscover the joy and importance of play and creativity (Drew, 1992, p. 36).

Characteristics of play may vary from one writer to another, based on different theoretical backgrounds. Basic characteristics of play may begin with the presence of two children in the same relatively restricted area, who may then engage in parallel play and eventually develop verbal interactions (Rogers-Warren, Ruggles, Peterson, & Cooper, 1983). Bruce (1993), on the other hand, identifies the following characteristics of play: play sometimes happens alone, sometime in pairs or groups, requires sufficient time to allow for ideas, feelings, relationships to coalesce, demonstrates mastery level of child, is holistic.

Smilansky and Shefatya (1990) follow generally accepted Piagetian definitions of play, and so describe play categories as functional play, constructive play, dramatic (symbolic or pretend play), and games with rules. Sociodramatic play is a particular kind of pretend play involving social interactions.

Categories of play defined by Parten (Federlein, Leesen-Firestone, & Elliot, 1982) include onlooker play, solitary play, parallel play, associative play, and cooperative play. The ability for a classroom teacher to encourage a positive play model necessitates the ability to observe in which category of play the child is currently engaged, to know the next stage of play development, and to have some idea how the teacher's presence in the classroom can help the child gradually move him/herself to the next level.

Several lists of play functions are available (Bruner, 1983; Drew, 1992; Gehlbach, 1991; Neugebauer, 1993). Bruner (1983) used a computer to tabulate results of play observations and discovered that children's play was longest,

richest, and most elaborate when children's play had a purpose (ie. to make something), contained the presence of a participating adult, and employed two children in the play episode.

Wasserman (1992) describes most classrooms as lacking in opportunities to play. Play can be the open ended, typical examples that readily come to mind, but can include also more focused, structured activities that enhance the development of problem-solving and social interactions. "Freedom to create and invent appears to be closely connected with the development of creative, inventive, innovative adults," states Wasserman (1992, p. 134). Included are descriptions of the childhood of inventors such as the Wright brothers, Thomas Edison, and Frank Lloyd Wright, who were all allowed much freedom to "play" with less family emphasis on school attendance or academic success.

Another function of play is the ability to learn to solve problems. Problem-solving techniques during play follow a set pattern (Tegano, Sawyer, & Moran, 1989, p. 94) that begins with the exploration of an idea, an object, or a social interaction (information gathering), proceeds through a diversive exploration (play continuum), which leads eventually to conversion into outcomes (problem-solving). Along with the ability to change the direction of exploration into something more challenging for the child, teachers must provide a classroom structure with secure boundaries that allow children to feel free from fear of failure sufficiently to explore during problem-solving.

Play helps the child practice representational thought through the use of "as if" situations (Dyson, 1990; Nourot & Van Hoorn, 1991; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Yawkey, 1983). The play sequence follows a pattern: motor actions the child uses in pretend play lead to a world of words and role-playing in which the child may need to add creative expression in order to fill in missing personal experiences with dramatic or fantasy scripts, requiring concentration and the ability to decenter, that is, to comprehend, consider, and select from among many alternatives (Yawkey, 1983).

The use of symbols for representational thought during play is related to the construction of logical-mathematical knowledge (Nourot & Van Hoorn, 1991). Symbols help to build the child's own sense of reality. Similarities in the world around children are retained as mental images (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). The child sees the symbol and remembers a real image previously encountered. Symbols may be toys that look like real objects or abstractions that represent real objects. Mental images are recreated by the child symbolically on paper as representational mapping, as digital mapping, in drawings combined with talk, in labels, and as schematic interpretations (Dyson, 1990). The child may dictate thoughts, stories, and experiences to an adult. Preschool and elementary curriculums built upon this progression are often referred to as whole language classrooms (Fields & Hillstead, 1990).

Renninger (1985) points out that much of the ability to play comes from within the child's own frame of reference, accounting for differences in play

between children using the same play objects. Re-engagement in play of an investigative nature, and support for shared interactions help the child to eventually construct a certain perspective. The support for shared interactions in the classroom comes from the teacher at the specific time support is needed.

An examination of the Reggio Emilia preschools in Italy reveals the role of the teacher to be a constant observer of signs of readiness in children and interpreter of children's actions and thoughts (Rankin, 1992). The curriculum design at the Reggio Emilia preschools follows the direction that the children's interest seem to dictate, changing from year to year as particular children lead the teacher's attention into various projects. The teacher must have a firm grasp of developmental stages and abilities in order to challenge students without overwhelming them as together the students and teachers create play with problem-solving techniques. Yet the teachers in the Reggio system have had little formal training. Most of the techniques are learned through on-the-job observations and staff meetings where much planning takes place (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1994). Despite a lack of formal education, the teachers are able to help preschoolers find an amazing depth of creativity and expression while co-creating the curriculum along with students and parents.

> One of the premises of creativity is that the process of knowing finds connections with the process of expressing what is known, using the endless resources that make up "the hundred languages of children," a slogan that Reggio educators use to stress the potential of children's expression (Gandini, 1992, p. 28).

The use of curriculum webs as a teaching technique also emphasizes the interactive role of the teacher and child (Workman & Anziano, 1993). Curriculum webbing requires that the teacher be a keen observer in order to build connecting bridges or webs between children's personal backgrounds, their classroom cognitive experiences, their social interactions, and particular curriculum topics that are inter-related in an atmosphere fitting the larger definition of play.

The role of the teacher is crucial in the encouragement of play situations in the preschool setting. When parents of children with special needs enroll them in an inclusive preschool setting, they often express hope that the child will improve socialization skills (S. Kurpiel, personal experience, August, 1993). Most opportunities for social interactions between children with and without disabilities do occur during free play in a typical preschool setting (Honig & McCarron, 1987; Rogers-Warren, Ruggles, Peterson, & Cooper, 1983; Schwartz, 1991).

A principal justification for placing preschool children in Early Invention into classrooms with typical students (inclusion) is that the emergence of social skills is a major developmental issue (Rogers-Warren, Ruggles, Peterson, & Cooper, 1983). Since imitation and modeling during play opportunities are common processes by which preschoolers learn, the belief is that children with special needs will acquire better social skills in a classroom of more typically developing students. However, merely placing children with special needs in inclusive preschool settings is not enough to assure successful socialization

(Bergen, 1993; Hampton University Mainstreaming Outreach Service, 1988; Schwartz, 1991). Poorly developed social skills of children with special needs may lead to discouragement of more sociable classmates with the result that, when given a choice, children with and without disabilities tend to prefer children most like themselves (Bordner & Berkley, 1992; Goldstein & Strain, 1988; Honig & McCarron, 1987; Rogers-Warren, Ruggles, Peterson, & Cooper, 1983).

When the children in the preschool classroom have a wide range of abilities, the role of the teacher is complex. The ability for children to play together may require more teacher intervention when children are not all progressing in typical developmental timeliness. When the program goals are aimed toward inclusion and full participation of all students, the teacher must utilize many opportunities to effect change. Teachers may change the environment, change teacher interventions, or change the peer group (Odom, McConnell, & Chandler, 1994).

> Instructional design is a phenomenon wherein a third party, a non-player, manages the child-environment system so that specific forms of adaptation will occur. Instructional design may take the form of personal intervention during the children's play, such as common "guiding." Or instructional design may take the form of specific pre-play organization of the environment in which play is to occur (Gelbach, 1991, p. 140)...Design of the environment must be carried out in ways that are sensitive to probabilities of occurrence of creative thoughts and actions (Gelbach, 1991, p. 144).

Changes in the physical environment established by the teacher can facilitate play opportunities. Availability of materials within reach of all students is an environmental concern. The physical arrangement of space can impact on

the ability of a child with special needs to participate (Goldstein & Strain, 1988). Wide aisles are needed for children with unsteady gaits or wheelchairs. Teachers may be required to erect partial screens to filter out noise and visual distractions for some children with special needs.

Toys are important tools in the preschool environment. Many toys appeal to children within a wide range of cultural and developmental diversity. Dolls, animals, musical instruments, seriation games, puzzles, board games, construction toys, movement toys, miniatures, and famous character replicas have universal appeal to young children (Swiniarski, 1991). Most items on the list can be found in typical preschool classrooms. Social toys, however, have been found to promote more interactions than isolate toys among students with diverse social abilities (Bordner & Berkely, 1992; Martin, Brady & Williams, 1991). Certain toys seem to need social interactions in order to provide satisfaction. Social toys include balls, dress-up clothes, housekeeping materials, puppets, and toy vehicles, while isolate toy examples are puzzles, pegboards, art materials, play-doh, and library materials (Martin, Brady & Williams, 1991, p. 156).

Research shows certain classroom areas can promote different types of socialization. Block areas tend to produce more fluency and vocabulary diversity than the housekeeping area (Isbell & Raines, 1991).

The length of play time is crucial to the progressive development of dramatic play, since more detailed play occurs after the first 15 minutes (Tegano & Burdette, 1991). While longer play time might benefit some children already

engaged in dramatic play, longer play time may also be frustrating for some children with developmental delays. One of the problems teachers must consider in inclusive settings is that children may be functioning in a range of play from fantasy play to parallel play, to solitary play, to beginning stages of imitative play (Honig & McCarron, 1987; Schwartz, 1991).

A second modification the teacher may choose is to become more facilitative during social interactions (Ford, 1993). "Teachers assume many roles in the classroom-as models, elicitors, organizers, planners, evaluators, and supervisors-to ensure the greatest amount of success for each child" (Harper-Whalen, Walmsley, & Moore, 1991). In an inclusive setting, the teacher may decide to intervene frequently to facilitate positive social interactions (Cole, Mills, Dale, & Jenkins, 1991; Schwartz, 1991). Examples of positive interventions provided by a teacher might include changes in the type of instruction, use of additional physical and verbal prompts, re-arrangement of activities, or a combination of any of these (Rogers-Warren, Ruggles, Peterson, & Cooper, 1983). Goldstein and Strain (1988) suggest more direct interventions: describing on-going play, helping to initiate joint play, repeating, expanding, or requesting clarification during group play. Harper-Whalen, Walmsley, & Moore (1991) describe instructional approaches as being either direct instruction (specific information about how to do something), or naturalistic (incidental instruction), meantime reminding the reader that the teacher must be cognizant of

developmental levels in order to take best advantage of opportunities that occur naturally during the day.

Rogow's formal observations in a mainstreamed preschool setting (1991) examined strategies that teachers need to employ in order to increase social play between children with and without disabilities. Results indicated that teacher intervention in the form of initiation of play, participation, elaboration, assistance, and physical proximity during play all increase the likelihood of interplay between such children.

Using a third alternative to influence change, the teacher can encourage peer-mediated interactions by helping to train children without disabilities to provide social initiations (Goldstein & Strain, 1988; Strain & Odom, 1986). The process of teaching peers to help socialize children with special needs has been controversial. Hundert & Houghton (1992) found that instructing the whole group in better socialization skills to encourage interactions by children with disabilities did not generalize to a play period later in the day or a few months later. Unless the teachers continually reinforced prosocial interactions between children, those with and those without disabilities continued to play with those children most like themselves.

Sociodramatic play is a specific type of pretend play involving two or more children. Yawkey (1986) describes the common links between creativity, sociodramatic play, and cognitive development as having the ability to take different roles, to use motor actions to link feedback from the environment, and

to practice decentering (the "as if" phenomenon again). Sociodramatic play increases levels of language performance (Levy, 1992). Sociodramatic play encouragement by the classroom teacher has promoted cognitive, socio-emotional, and academic improvement with socio-economically disadvantaged children (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990). Lack of development of involvement in fantasy play can impair social interactions between children with and without special needs, particularly in boys (Schwartz, 1991).

Learning actual roles for "actors" during sociodramatic play can increase social interactions between children with and without special needs (Goldstein & Stain, 1988). Teaching memorized "scripts" on play topics such as grocery shopping to small groups consisting of two typical children and one child with autism has led to more socialization (Goldstein & Cisar, 1992). Such pre-set scripts appear to be effective when children without special needs are attempting to bridge social interactions with children with certain specific special needs such as autism, mental retardation, or conduct disorders (Strain & Odom, 1986). Such peer-related interventions appear to have no negative effect on the children without disabilities who participate in the scripts, according to several studies (Strain & Odom, 1986, p. 549).

The ability of the classroom teacher to correctly assess what is happening during play is crucial. Several types of classroom assessments can be used simultaneously, including checklists, rating scales, portfolios, photographs, video and audio tools (Diffily & Fleege, 1993). Formal assessments can include

classroom observations when the observer is trained in what to see. By evaluating play in mainstreamed and segregated preschool settings using Parten and Piagetian scales, researchers infer that both groups engage in the same play levels (Federlein, Leesen-Firestone, & Elliot, 1982). The tendency is that children with disabilities placed in inclusive settings interact more than children with disabilities placed in segregated settings.

Play language can be recorded verbatim by an observer, then later rated (Harper-Whalen, Walmsley, & Moore, 1991; Vukelich, 1992). Barrett and Yarrow (1977) focused studies on children's emerging social language patterns, identifying prosocial behaviors as those designed to meet a need for physical or emotional support. Analysis of sociodramatic play using molecular and molar semiotic methods can be used to determine ways groups of familiar children maintain the stability of the group, utilizing such functions as maintaining the structure of interpersonal distances (Ariel, 1992). Such analysis may require much additional training for the typical preschool teacher.

Other scales may be utilized with little formal training. Six factors deemed to be crucial for the development of sociodramatic play are imitative role-play, make-believe with regard to objects, make-believe with regard to actions and situations, persistence, interaction, and verbal communication (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990, p. 147). Sample forms for observation and scoring of sociodramatic play can be found in Smilansky & Shefatya's book on play facilitation (1990, p. 241-255).

Proactive leadership in staff training requires knowledge of the strategies for implementing change. A child care staff fits the human resource model (or open systems theory) that focuses on the interdependence between the people and the organizations to which they belong (Bolman & Deal, 1991). A staff who works in close proximity over a period of time has built up a culture of "stories" that help to define who they are and how they function (Morgan, 1989; Robbins, 1992). Use of such forms of informal culture to help build a sense of professional pride may be a necessary alternative to more tangible financial rewards when trying to initiate change in a profession known for low pay. In a typical child care center, the director often serves multiple roles as administrator, staff trainer, evaluator, and co-teacher. The role of administrator may sometimes co-incide with the role of co-worker.

Vision, communication, trust, and positive self-regard are necessary management skills (Bennis & Nanus, 1985), particularly for an administrator who works closely with staff. In order for improvements and changes to take place in the child care setting, the director must carry the vision of program excellence, and use whatever change agents the director possesses to move the program from where it currently is to what the director wants it to become. The art of building team teachers from professionals trained in different domains is a skill that will be needed by many school and child care administrators as more classrooms change from individual teaching models to the team approach of combining those in special education with those in regular education (Bergen, 1994).

Several domains were investigated to provide the best vision for this project. Early childhood theories, policies, and best available practices were studied. Special education theories, training issues, and classroom strategies were explored. Leadership pertaining to organizational theories were examined for training models to use. The ERIC database was searched using a variety of indicators. Descriptors were used to search additional related databases. Sociological issues pertaining to families, especially those with children with special needs were researched. Federal and state policies, especially regarding policies pertaining to Early Intervention, Americans with Disabilities act (ADA), and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were read.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals

The following goal was identified for this practicum. Staff members would gain sufficient knowledge in the areas of developmental stages, characteristics, and assessments to facilitate play for a diverse population in an inclusive preschool setting.

Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum.

1. A post survey will show that 6 out of 8 teachers can list at least three items in each of the following areas: characteristics of play, categories of play, and functions of play.

2. A post survey will show that all 8 teachers have sufficient knowledge to name and describe at least three methods of assessing play.

3. All 8 teachers will demonstrate use of an assessment scale to evaluate the play of individual students.

4. All 8 teachers will develop at least one prop box each for free play and will demonstrate knowledge of it's use for the classroom.

Measurement of Outcomes

A post survey was designed to determine whether 6 out of 8 teachers would be able to list at least three items each in the areas of play characteristics, play categories, and play functions (see Appendix A). The post survey would also be used to determine whether all staff members had sufficient knowledge to name and describe at least three methods of assessing play.

The writer developed a simple checklist to determine whether all staff members could demonstrate use of an assessment scale to evaluate the play of individuals students (see Appendix F). The writer planned to personally explain the scale to each staff member, check the person's ability to understand the terminology, and evaluate each person's ability to use a scale by watching each teacher rate at least one student during free play, using the check list to be certain that all teachers had completed all assessment requirements.

Measurement of outcome for the prop boxes was to be conducted by means of observable behavior. An acceptable evidence of successful prop box preparation by each of the eight teachers would be the writer's direct observation of the classroom display and use of such prop boxes.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Staff members were unable to facilitate social interactions during free play sufficiently to meet diverse needs in an inclusive preschool setting. Staff members were not knowledgeable about several aspects of play, including characteristics of play, play categories, play functions, and play assessments.

Staff training seemed the most natural solution. The literature showed several successful training strategies used to encourage staff improvements in facilitating play. One method found to increase the likelihood of social interactions between children with diverse abilities focused on environmental changes, such as improvement in use of space, equipment, and materials (Gelbach, 1991; Goldstein & Strain, 1988).

Another method used by Goldstein & Strain (1988) centered on staff training to teach peers to interact more with children with disabilities in the classroom. The method used scripts with role-playing techniques during staff training sessions in order to experiment with the most natural way to present the scripts to the children. Several studies have shown the effectiveness of using play scripts with preschoolers of varying abilities (Goldstein & Strain, 1988; Strain & Odom, 1986; Yawkey, 1986; Yawkey & Hrncir, 1982).

A third successful method expanded the teachers repertoire of play intervention strategies to facilitate play between children of varying abilities.

Staff interventions suggested by Goldstein and Strain (1988) and Rogow (1991) such as initiation of joint play, repeating, expanding, and clarifying have been found to increase social interactions between children with and without special needs.

A collaborative approach to staff training has been found to be effective in development of strategies to promote social interactions in inclusive settings (Hundert & Hopkins, 1992). Jones (1993, p. 60-61) described a successful collaborative approach among preschool teachers trying to establish an emerging dialogue to facilitate play. An important aspect of the collaboration was allowing staff members as many individual choices as possible.

The on-going Reggio Emilia approach to staff development emphasizes the interactive role of the child and the teacher, as well as the interactive roles of the staff among themselves (Rinaldi, 1994). In this approach, which includes children of diverse abilities, the staff meets often, developing collegial relationships that form "a co-construction together towards a common interpretation of educational goals" (Rinaldi, p. 56). In this approach, the interactions between children and teachers reflect the broader definition of play beyond "free play" to include creativity and problem-solving as described previously (Wasserman, 1992).

Staff training that concentrated on the physical environment alone did not seem broad enough to solve the staff's problems. Teaching play scripts seemed appealing and perhaps worth trying. However, some students at the center were still participating at the level of observer or were in solitary play, and did not yet

comprehend the abstractness of pretend play. Also, neither strategy had a play assessment component.

Teaching new play interventions to staff members, as described in the third method, was certainly needed. Any selected solution should include opportunities for the staff to learn new techniques for facilitating joint play. The video tapes had demonstrated that the staff lacked specific ways to extend and expand joint play. Learning such strategies requires that the teacher know just when to intervene as well as what to say. Knowledge of developmental stages of play would be a requisite for such interventions. The staff currently lacked such knowledge, therefore, the solution would not be sufficient to meet the intended goal.

A series of staff trainings led by the writer was also rejected. The staff would not feel much ownership to the process if the writer assumed all responsibility for presentation of information. Additionally, director-led trainings would not likely build collaboration between various domains. Since hands-on methods of learning new information are advocated by the writer, a lecture series seemed inappropriate.

The writer had a great interest in the type of staff collaboration described in the recent literature on the Reggio Emilia approach. The approach broadens the definition of play to include all sorts of discovery and investigation by the children and teachers together. Such an approach must evolve over a period of time and depends greatly on a high level of staff involvement and change over a

period of time. The staff at the center might someday choose such a direction, but for now, more basic information about play development was needed.

Description of Selected Solution

A collaborative in-house staff training project was chosen as the best solution. The writer would prepare an extensive range of topics pertaining to facilitation of play in inclusive settings. Each teacher would be responsible for selection and presentation of a topic during staff meetings held over a period of several months. Preparing for presentations and attending each other's mini-workshops could provide a common framework to encourage team building. The wide diversity of academic backgrounds of the preschool staff would actually prove helpful, since different staff members could choose from their own areas of expertise. The concept of self-selected training sessions could also help staff members from different backgrounds clarify their role on the team (Robbins, 1992, p. 294-295).

By using a collaborative approach, the project would be able to incorporate a variety of solution strategies suggested by the literature. The topics list would include previously mentioned successful strategies, such as environmental changes, peer modeling, and teacher interventions. Information about different educational perspectives (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992) would be a potential topic that might help teachers understand the roles of early educators and special educators in facilitating play. The Reggio Emilia approach, while new to the staff, was one in which a few teachers had shown interest; the approach

would be a choice on the topics list. The training topics must include information on acceptable methods of conducting play assessments, including selecting and conducting play assessments.

The writer would present basic information on play characteristics, functions, and categories at the first meeting in order to have everyone start with general information. The assumption going into the project would be that staff members would select topics of interest suitable to individual capabilities. Some topics would be easier than others, allowing for individual differences in ability, in risk-taking, and in available personal preparation time. If certain crucial topics on play assessments were not chosen, the writer would present the topics.

Staff members could choose teams or work individually to prepare training presentations. The writer would provide an extensive selection of research and journal articles for each chosen topic, as well as offer personal assistance in planning presentations. Subsequent training meetings would be held according to a pre-set schedule over a period of eight months. Within these guidelines, the chosen solution seemed to be capable of helping all goals and outcomes to be met.

Report of Action Taken

Prior to the first meeting, the writer compiled research, selected potential topics for presentations, and constructed packets of information for each topic. Because of staff time constraints and a range of staff abilities to conduct independent research, full copies of all reference material were provided. The

existence of fully available information also strengthened the likelihood of staff to select less familiar topics for exploration. The first three weeks of the project were spent compiling and sorting all needed references (see Appendix B), and designing attractive displays for the first meeting. A suitable evening to hold the first meeting was agreed upon by the staff.

The writer chaired the first meeting in order to introduce the project, divide responsibilities, and discuss procedures (see Appendix C). The staff were informed about the self-selection of topics and encouraged to consider creativity in presentation methods. Engaging displays of possible topics related to play were arranged in various parts of the room. Staff was given sufficient time to browse through potential subject matter and to decide how to divide themselves into teams for presentations.

After decisions were made, a calendar with dates, times, and sequence for the presentations was determined. Emphasis was placed on the fact that teachers were welcome to do their own additional research. A written agenda prior to each meeting was to be handed to the director. The writer also offered any needed assistance in advance to all presenters. The writer agreed to make any presentations that seemed crucial to the project, but were not chosen by the staff. "The Comparison of Two Developmental Theories" and "Play Assessments" were selected by the writer after the staff had agreed upon their topics.

At the same meeting, the writer presented the introduction and first workshop, "The Fundamentals of Play" to provide a common framework for

subsequent training. Fundamentals included examples of characteristics, categories, and functions of play.

During the next several months, nine additional sessions were taught by staff members (see Appendix D). In each case, the same procedure was followed. About two weeks before each presentation was due, the writer arranged to spend sufficient time with the next presenter(s) on the agenda to ascertain that preparations for the presentation were going well and that the presenter(s) had all needed materials. By intention, the writer refrained from making suggestions about delivery methods unless asked. If necessary, the writer helped to organize the agenda.

At the end of each session, the writer would chair a brief wrap-up. If suggestions to improve daily practice at the center had not already been clearly delineated during the workshop, such suggestions were discussed at this time. The writer kept log notes pertaining to the suggestions so that implementations could be made.

Prop boxes were prepared throughout the months following the third presentation. Demonstrations were held at staff meetings if prop boxes were assembled. Alternatively, written instructions on the content and use of the prop box were displayed in the office for several days before being introduced in the classroom. The prop boxes were used in the classroom for several days before the video taping was arranged, so that more natural use of the boxes would be observed.

The writer and the special educator spent some time experimenting with the application of the Smilansky scale (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990) in the classrooms over a period of weeks to become familiar sufficiently with the operation of the scale. After the last presentation, arrangements were made to conduct play assessments in each classroom. The writer spent individual time explaining the use of the Smilansky scale to each teacher, then returned later to verify the proper use of the mechanism in the classroom setting.

The group meeting to write the first draft of the position paper on play was held during an evening wrap-up session (see Appendix E). During that time, also, the post survey was conducted for all but two of the members who were absent. The two absent members completed the post survey during the next school day.

Because of time constraints, the first draft of the position paper was distributed to staff members to take home, correct, and return for the final draft to be compiled. The final draft was approved and put in the center's files to be used for parent orientation, new staff training, and intern orientation. Copies were given to the IU staff along with an explanatory cover letter.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The classroom teachers were previously unable to adequately facilitate play in the inclusive preschool setting and furthermore lacked a cohesive concept of the relationship of the teacher in facilitating social interactions among children with diverse abilities during play. An in-house collaborative staff training project was initiated.

Outcome one stated the following: A post survey will show that 6 out of 8 teachers can list at least three items in each of the following areas: characteristics of play, categories of play, and functions of play. The post survey showed that 6 out of 8 teachers were able to fully list at least three characteristics of play. The other two teachers were able to list two characteristics fully, but the wording for a third characteristic was vague. Eight of 8 teachers were able to list a minimum of three categories of play and were also able to list at least three functions of play (see Table 2). Outcome one was met satisfactorily.

Outcome two stated the following: A post survey will show that all 8 teachers have sufficient knowledge to name and describe at least three methods of assessing play. All 8 staff members could list at least three methods of assessing play (see Table 2, #4). Therefore, outcome two was successfully met.

Table 2

Results of 8 Staff Post Surveys on Knowledge of Play Issues

Topic of Question		No Resource Given	Wrong Answer	Partial Answer	Adequate Answer
#1.	play characteristics	0	0	2	6
#2.	play categories	0	0	0	8
#3.	functions of play	0	0	0	8
#4.	assessments	0	0	0	8
#5.	description of a favorite play from childhood	NA	0	0	8

Outcome three stated the following: All 8 teachers will demonstrate use of an assessment scale to evaluate the play of individual students. Outcome three was met successfully in the subsequent manner. The writer explained the use of the Smilansky scale, a play assessment tool (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990, p. 237-255) to each teacher individually. Each staff member then used the Smilansky scale to rate children in the teacher's own group during free play. The writer revisited each teacher individually to hear a reconstruction of the particular circumstances and to discuss the rationale behind the scale that led to the rating received by specific children. Through the personal interview, the writer was able to determine whether each teacher would be able to use the scale in the future unaided. All 8 teachers showed such ability.

Outcome four stated the following: All 8 teachers will develop at least one prop box each for free play and will demonstrate knowledge of it's use for the classroom. Each teacher either personally demonstrated the use of at least one

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prop box or displayed the box in the office, accompanied by a sign detailing use of the contents. Additionally, each teacher constructed a permanent sign attached to the inside of each prop box, listing the contents and suggestions for continued use. Random videotaping and personal observation showed evidence that the prop boxes were being used by the children. Therefore, outcome four was successfully attained.

Discussion

No major problems were evident during the planning and implementation of the project. However, the written agenda did not always reflect the excitement generated during the presentation. For example, the first meeting on play environments appeared to contain information with which the staff would be familiar. The teacher took the broader term of inclusion to represent a wide range of inclusive practices relating not only to children with special needs but to all types of diversity. The staff had recently spent months reviewing anti-bias themes during the process of accreditation. Yet, the topic engendered many suggestions for change, particularly for the storage, rotation, and easy access of play materials. The writer responded within two weeks to provide additional, improved storage and rotation methods. The process reminded the writer and the staff of the opportunities for growth, both with staff and with children, when a topic is recapitulated.

The presentation on Reggio Emilia was difficult for two of the three teachers presenting the material, since only one presenter had actually attended a

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workshop presented by Gandini (PA Early Intervention Conference, Hershey, PA, May 22-24, 1993). Without visual clues, the other two members could not quite envision how the projects for Reggio Emilia are chosen or how the development of the projects unfold according to the interests of certain children. The process for including children of various abilities was also unclear. The available information was not specific about how the projects fit into a regular daily routine. A video about Reggio Emilia was borrowed from a contemporary of the writer. The writer also spent many hours discussing the questions with the two staff members, since the writer had attended several presentations by Gandini. The staff made the presentation successfully, explaining that many questions still remained to be answered. The staff showed interest in the concept, since several aspects of the collaborative approach between family, children, and staff mirror the direction to which the staff seems to be evolving.

The most interesting aspect of this presentation was that one teacher became gradually aware of the connection between the inability to visualize a concept about which she had no personal experience, with the inability of young children to fully comprehend a concept for which they have had no personal experience. The teachers returned to this idea again and again. Eventually, noticeable changes in the teaching approach of this teacher became evident. More attention was paid to attaching a wide range of personal experiences to each new concept. Personal conversations with the writer led to more investigations into the construction of knowledge as it relates to play. A sort of

"aha" occurred, bridging a variety of personal attempts to understand play issues. A description of a recent incident in the teacher's own words can clarify this best.

> I believe I am beginning to understand the concept of play. While I was washing out the paint jars in the sink, the water began squirting out all over, turning blue, since I had used blue paint. The children crowded around, interested in watching the water squirt so high and with such an odd color. One of them said, 'try the red jar.' When I did, they all clapped, very excited that what they had expected, had happened. I am wondering exactly what it was that caught their interest, and if there is some way I can turn this into an experiment that the children could try (P. Cronin, personal communication, January 6, 1995).

The other difficulty was of a different nature. One assistant teacher refused any assistance in preparing the presentation. The agenda was still not turned in the day before the presentation. Because of time constraints, the presentation could not be postponed. The writer accepted a hastily written agenda. Though the teacher was one of the most successful enablers of play between children with diverse needs, interventions seem to happen more by instinct than by theoretical foundations. The writer feared that presenting in front of the rest of the staff, many of whom had significantly higher levels of formal education, might be difficult for the teacher. During the presentation, the assistant teacher, obviously nervous, floundered badly. After an appropriate time was given to allow for the teacher to regain poise, the writer made the decision to intervene from the audience, helping to complete the presentation by addressing leading questions to the teacher in order to help organize the contribution. The result was that the assistant teacher could continue, with support. The

result was that the assistant teacher could continue, with support. The experience was beneficial particularly because it modeled a common methodology to help children with diverse needs participate fully: Teacher intervention to support the learner without taking over the whole experience.

Perhaps the most interesting presentation was given by another assistant teacher, who chose the topic of designing a better play area. Although the agenda looked relatively simple, a lively discussion led to some real changes in the dramatic play areas at the center. The teacher had prepared a sample prop box, generating enthusiasm for the staff to decide how to select a prop box topic that would be interesting to the preparer as well as the children. Methods of displaying the boxes were debated, with the decision being made to purchase, paint, and hang new shelves above each dramatic play area.

One of the prepared prop boxes contained materials for playing "ski trip," a popular game from a previous year. The children seemed to have difficulty this year imagining how to use the props, especially the cardboard "skis" that had been so much fun before. The writer brought in an entire ski outfit, including skis, put them on in front of the children, explained how the family was going on a ski trip over the holidays, and what kinds of activities would be planned. Subsequent observations in the dramatic play area showed a marked increase in the use of the prop box.

One of the benefits of the in-house training was that the staff did begin to work together in a variety of ways. Decisions concerning new room

arrangements were made co-operatively. The new special educator was willing to make more than one presentation, both alone and with other newer teachers. The presentation material designed by the special educator to outline the different historical backgrounds between early education and special education will be useful in future staff training.

One disappointment for the writer was that the staff did not select some of the topics covering constructivism or symbolism. The writer needed to make the immediate decision whether to press the issue. While the writer could have chosen to present those topics, two others were more crucial to the project. To make more than two additional presentations would overemphasize the role of the writer in proportion to the role of the co-presenters. Being able to accept the will of the group seemed more important than covering the additional topics. The growth cycle of an organization varies, and rushing growth too quickly can destroy morale (Scott, 1992, p. 345). Remembering that the group had already made many changes in a short period of time, the writer decided that the team had probably selected from a realistic range of topics. Constructivism and symbolism are both large topics that can be addressed during future staff training sessions.

One question on the post survey asked the staff to itemize what information would help to encourage play in the classroom among children with varying abilities. Most teachers mentioned the prop boxes as being very useful tools in helping a variety of children join in play. The kindergarten teacher

mentioned that one result of the study was that she now was encouraged to prioritize kindergarten time better to be sure to leave even more time for play to evolve.

Two changes were made in the classrooms that had an indirect, positive effect on the project. The administration decided before the fall term that having smaller group sizes would benefit social interactions. Therefore, instead of two groups of about 16-20 students each with two or three teachers in each group, the children were divided into 4 groups of about 6-12 children with one or two teachers in each group. Also, the role of the special educator was enlarged to include writing most of the documentation for the inclusion program, freeing other teacher's time to allow for more direct interactions during free play. Both changes had a positive impact on the quality of personal interactions between teachers and individual students.

Recommendations

One recommendation stands out in the mind of the writer. Upon reflection of the whole project, the writer believes that too much intensity was displayed by the whole team, including the writer. Considering that the subject of the training was "play," little playfulness seemed to be evident in the presentations. Although the writer offered the presenters a choice of presentation vehicles, including dramatic role-playing, games, videos or any method that might impart the message, little range was shown in presentation styles. Had the writer

taken a more playful tone from the beginning, possibly the resulting presentation styles would have been more creative. Recommendations for future staff trainings, therefore, include the need to insert more of a playful, fun element to the process.

Because the writer realized toward the end that the intensity was present, the decision was made to change the wording of the last question in the post survey. By suggesting that each teacher reflect on a period in childhood when play was especially memorable, the writer hoped to recapture at least a bit of the exuberance of play. The question also asked the teacher if there might be some way to recreate that type of experience in the center. Some of the answers indicated that the teachers were able to do so.

> "Playing outside in the summer, I used dirt, rocks, grass, and other materials from the earth to cook. I loved the way the different materials felt. I could use this experience to share with the children the feelings that I have toward nature."

> "During the winter, my three siblings and I would pretend each of us was from a working family from a different country and we would make pretend gardens, and go to the 'market' to sell our wares. We would pretend to make clothes out of animal skins. I do not see how we could do this today without seeming politically incorrect. Perhaps we could read books about how children live in other countries."

"We spent all summer outdoors. We played 'kick the can' with all my cousins. It was so warm, the feeling of bonding. We are like a family here and could play it on the playground." (post survey, January, 1995).

Dissemination

The information in this project is specific to one setting, since the presentations were made by the teachers on staff. However, the process of using in-house training sessions could be used with any staff. The fact that all the references are available makes it possible for staff with a range of educational backgrounds to use the information contained here, or to adapt the information to individual needs.

In a center where the staff is not able or interested in doing the presentations, the information is sufficiently complete for the material to be presented by the director or curriculum coordinator. The steps taken are itemized clearly to be useful as a training packet. Of course, as happened with this staff, choices could be made to meet individual needs.

Dissemination to outside sources could be by means of local, state and national conference presentations. Several members of the staff are capable of presenting at conferences, and in fact, some have already done so. Another method of dispersement would be by journal articles written by the writer. Interest in staff training issues is consistently high. Opportunities to implement in-house training should be attractive to a wide range of centers.

As a result of the staff training project, the staff has identified several projects for continued staff training. Training projects in constructivism and symbolism will be introduced, then re-visited over a period of years. Interest in training projects in the Reggio Emilia approach is high. The writer has agreed to purchase additional books and videos for the center in order to encourage further study. Two recently purchased have been added to the library (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1994; Katz & Cesarone, 1994). Additionally, books on the study of inclusion have been added to the library at the center (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995; Rogers, 1994). The project itself will be kept in the center library as a future resource, as well as complete copies of the references. Materials on the topic will be added as needed.

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APPENDIX A

STAFF SURVEYS

Pre-Survey on Play Issues

This pre-survey is not meant to put you on the spot. It will be used to determine what areas we need to cover in future staff training. The director's premise is that we may all need some clarification as to the role of play for preschoolers and the teacher's role as facilitator of that play. You may know more than you first think you do if you relax and think about this for awhile. You may take this sheet home to complete, and you may use any reference books or materials to help you complete the lists. However, please do not collaborate with other staff members and do not list anything that you truly do not understand or use in your daily interactions as a teacher.

1. **Please list as many characteristics of play as you are able to recall. If you can, name the source or sources from which you assembled the list of characteristics (Piaget, Bruner, your college teacher, staff training, whoever).**

2. **Please list any developmental categories of play that you may know, and the theorist who devised the categories if you can.**

3. **Please list a few reasons why you personally value play in preschool.**

4. **Please list some ways to assess children's play in a preschool setting.**

5. **Do adults play? Do you play outside the preschool setting? What are some characteristics of your adult play?**

Post survey on Play Issues

This post survey is not meant to put you on the spot. It will be used to determine what areas we have mastered during the past 8 month staff training. Since the project was a group effort, and since you collaborate daily in team teaching, you may work with your team to answer the questions.

1. **Please list as many characteristics of play as you are able to recall. If you can, name the source or sources from which you assembled the list of characteristics (Piaget, Bruner, your college teacher, staff training, whoever).**

2. **Please list any developmental categories of play that you may know, and the theorist who devised the categories if you can.**

3. **What are some of the functions of play in a child care/preschool setting?**

4. **Please list some ways to assess children's play in a preschool setting.**

5. **What have you learned during this 8 month staff training that will help you to encourage play in the classroom among children of varying abilities?**

6. **Remember a scene from your own childhood when you particularly enjoyed some type of play. What time of year was it? Indoors or outside? Briefly describe it. What feelings does it evoke? Can you think of any ways to re-create that type of experience here at school? Can you guess which children presently enrolled would enjoy it most?**

APPENDIX B

TOPICS FOR STAFF TRAINING

Topics for Staff Training

I. Physical and emotional play environments for inclusive settings (Bos, 1992; Bredekamp, 1987; Carter, 1992; Chandler, 1994; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Galant & Hanline, 1993; Gunsberg, 1991; Harper-Whalen, Walmsley, & Moore, 1991; Honig & McCarron, 1987; Jones & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Kotloff, 1993; Martin, Brady & Williams, 1991; McCracken, 1993; Pennsylvania Early Intervention Guidelines, 1992; Rogers-Warren, Ruggles, Peterson, & Cooper, 1983; Storch, 1987; Tegano & Burdette, 1991; Swiniarski, 1991).

- A. What are the important issues
- B. What changes could be made to our setting
- C. how should we begin to implement changes

II. Sociodramatic play (choose one of the following categories)

- A. The teacher's role in facilitating sociodramatic play (Bergen, 1993; Bordner & Berkley, 1992; Brown, Althouse, & Anfin, 1993; Crosser, 1992; Fields & Hillstead, 1990; Ford, 1993; Gronlund, 1992; Gunsberg, 1991; Isbell & Raines, 1991; Levy, 1992; Rogow, 1991; Vukelich, 1990).
  1. what is the teacher's role with children already engaged in sociodramatic play
  2. what methods can the teacher use to encourage those not engaged in sociodramatic play
  3. what methods can the teacher use to encourage social interactions between children already in sociodramatic play and those who are not
- B. Use of play scripts to encourage dramatic play between children of diverse needs (Goldstein & Cisar, 1992; Goldstein & Strain, 1988; Strain & Odom, 1986; Yawkey, 1986; Yawkey & Hrncir, 1982).
  1. description of how to use play scripts with children of diverse abilities
  2. review of three scripts available from Goldstein
     - a. permission to use them has been obtained from Dr. Goldstein
     - b. feasibility of using them in classroom
     - c.. would they work with all students regardless of degree of special needs
  3. results of use in our classroom
- C. Designing a better dramatic play area
  1. suggestions for how to re-design both dramatic play areas at the school
     - a. actually renovate both dramatic play areas
     - b. gather information on success
       (a). suggestions for further improvements

(b). implement changes until all teachers are satisfied with results

(c). set up rules for maintaining each dramatic play area (for staff and students)

2. instruction for building prop boxes (Beaty, 1990, p. 326-327; Myhre, 1993; Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990, chapter three)
   a. each teacher will design and build one prop box for use in classroom
   b. decisions must be made how to maintain them in the classroom

III. Differences between the educational and philosophical backgrounds of special educators and early childhood educators (Bergen, 1994; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992; Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990; Kostelnik, 1992; Wang, Walberg, & Reynolds, 1992; Wolery, 1991).
   A. look at models from each
   B. what do they have in common
   C. what can we learn from each other
   D. how can we bridge the gap in the classroom

IV. Study of the project approach and curriculum webs as they relate to play issues (Bredekamp, 1993; Forman & Gandini (videotape, no date); Gandini, 1993; Gandini, 1992; Gandini, 1991; LeeKeenan & Edwards, 1992; Malaguzzi, 1993; Pittsburgh-Reggio Project, 1994; Rankin, 1992; Trepanier-Street, 1993; Wing, 1992; Workman & Anziano, 1993)
   A. what is the approach
   B. can it be used in a diverse setting
   C. how can it be adapted for use in our own setting

V. Piagetian influences on play (choose one of the following topics)
   A. The constructionist view of play (Bruner, 1983; Castle, 1990; Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992; Dinwiddle, 1993; Forman, 1984; Gehlbach, 1991; Kamii & DeVries, 1980; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Renninger, 1985)
      1. what is the approach
      2. can it be used in a diverse setting
      3. how can it be adapted for use in our own setting
   B. Symbolism and it's relationship to play (Bruner, 1983; Dickinson & Smith, 1991; Dyson, 1990; Nourot & Van Hoorn, 1991; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Trawick-Smith, 1990; Vukelich, 1990)
      1. definitions of symbolism
      2. how can teacher's intentional plans for symbolism enhance play
      3. how can symbolism be extended into all areas of the curriculum
      4. how can the teacher extend symbolism to include a variety of needs

C. High/Scope concept of plan/do/review (High/Scope Resource; personal resources from kindergarten teacher who has subscription)
   1. what is the philosophy behind plan/do/review
   2. would it need adaptations to be used in our setting
   3. what period of the day could it fit
   4. how would we get started

VI. Play assessments (Ariel, 1992; Barclay & Breheny, 1994; Bergen & Feld, 1993; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992; Diffily & Fleege, 1993; Federlein, Leesen-Firestone, & Elliot, 1982; Harper-Whalen, Walmsley, & Moore, 1991; Hills, 1993; Schweinhart, 1993; Shriner, Ysseldyke, Thurlow, & Honetschlager, 1994; Vukelich, 1992)
   A. what kinds of play assessments are available
   B. what adaptations need to be made for diverse abilities
   C. how much classroom time would be taken away from students
   D. what assessment model would work best in our setting
   E. how can we begin to implement it

VII. Book review: *Facilitating Play* (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990)
   1. review of information
   2. how can this information be used in our school with children with diverse abilities
   3. can we use any of the play assessment scales
   4. how often would they need to re-done-continually/ monthly/semester
   5. permission to use scales has been obtained from Dr. Smilansky.

VIII. Addressing the value of play to families of preschoolers (Bredekamp, 1987; Christie & Enz, 1993; Sapp, 1992; Segal & Adcock, 1986)
   A. how can we enlarge the scope of the word "play" for families
   B. how can we help families to recognize the value of play in the curriculum
   C. how can we help families facilitate play at home
   D. if we sponsored a "play night" at school, what would it look like and what would we hope to accomplish
   E. how could we encourage families to visit and join in play at the center

APPENDIX C

AGENDA FOR FIRST STAFF MEETING

Agenda for First Staff Meeting

I. Introduction of staff training series on play issues (about 15 minutes).
   - A. Purpose is to study several facets of play in order to become better facilitators of social interactions between children with diverse abilities.
   - B. Format will include individual or small group studies of specific issues followed by presentation (about 30-60 minutes each) of findings at staff meetings.
   - C. Presentations must have a written component that can be compiled into a training manual on play for future use at the center.
   - D. All play topics must be covered, by small groups, individuals, or director.
   - E. Staff training project will take place over period of next 8 months.
   - F. Culmination of training will be the staff production of a position paper expressing the school's viewpoints of the value of play in the inclusive preschool classroom.

II. Group discussion (about 15 minutes).
   - A. Questions to clarify training issues.
   - B. Suggestions for improvement of format.

III. Presentation of resources (about 20 minutes).
   - A. Tables around the room will be placed with available resource material according to topic.
   - B. Staff may browse over materials, ask questions, informally discuss who is interested in which topics.
   - C. Staff may use additional resources accessible to them.
   - D. Presentations may include video tapes from the classroom, posters, outside experts (with small honorarium), discussion groups, handouts, overheads, other ideas.

IV. Divide into groups (about 15 minutes).
   - A. Decide who will be in each group.
   - B. Staff will divide the topics among themselves.
   - C. Decide an order that makes sense.
   - D. Select calendar dates.

V. Overview of culminating activity (about 5 minutes).
   - A. As a team, staff will prepare a written position paper synthesizing how we view play in the context of an inclusive preschool setting.
   - B. Position paper will become part of permanent school manual along with mission statement, goals, curriculum, behavior guidelines.
   - C. Position paper will be used to inform parents, new staff, IU consultants, interns how we view play.

VI. **Purpose of tonight's presentation led by director is to gain a common framework and relate it to our own preschool inclusive setting (about 60 minutes).**

- **A. Discussion of functions of play (see handout).**
- **B. Discussion of characteristics of play (see handout).**
- **C. Discussion of categories of play (see handout).**

Appendix D

AGENDAS FOR STAFF MEETINGS

Session One
Fundamentals of Play

I. Rationale for Play (Nourat & Van Hoorn, 1991)
   - A. Play is characterized by use of symbols
   - B. Play provides opportunities to decenter
   - C. Relationships between play and literacy, problem-solving, perspective-taking, and creativity

II. Types of play (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990)
   - A. Functional
   - B. Constructive
   - C. Dramatic
   - D. Games with rules

III. Stages of developmental symbolism
   - A. Children act on world directly through sensori-motor activity
   - B. Children contemplate, realize people and objects are separate from them
   - C. Children discover a link between salient features of a medium(such as writing) and salient features of their own personal experience(this looks like steps)

IV. Teachers role in classroom play
   - A. Historically inactive so as not to disturb child-centered activity
   - B. Constructionist view is that teacher does take a more active role
     1. Prepare environment
     2. Act as coach
     3. Assess play

Session Two Agenda
Physical and Emotional Play Environments for Inclusive Settings

I. Exposing Children to the Wealth of Variety in People and Artifacts of Their Cultures
   - A. More dolls/posters representing many cultures, ages, abilities/disabilities, males and females.
   - B. Books showing diverse cultures.
   - C. Exploration of adaptive equipment and devises used by people with disabilities.
   - D. Dramatic play-more than one representative item available for each group to avoid tokenism.
   - E. Culturally authentic tools from home and work, clothing, furniture, dolls, puppets.
   - F. Puzzles of an array of cultural groups.
   - G. Posters, pictures and art forms (paintings, sculptures, wall hangings, rugs or mobiles) from own and other cultures in the languages they speak.
   - H. Collages from magazine and catalog pictures-lots of faces and settings with wide range of diversity.
   - I. Persona dolls.
   - J. Invite parents, grandparents, friends to read, sing in own language, play music, show and tell treasured art objects..
   - K. Invite people with disabilities to talk about work/home/talents.

II. Areas of Interests in the Child Care Environment
   - A. Blocks, building, people, vehicles, maps
   - B. Language, books, writing, listening
   - C. Discovery-science/math
   - D. Games/puzzles
   - E. Manipulatives
   - F. Dramatic play
   - G. Art
   - H. Music
   - I. Computer/audiovisual
   - J. Large muscle

III. Ways to encourage social interactions
   - A. Show children how to use center materials
   - B. Introduce materials as children progress according to interest/themes
   - C. Partner children for solitary play materials (art, tablework, academics)
   - D. Have teacher model play interaction
   - E. Use play periods longer than 30 minutes
   - F. Set up small groups that integrate children

G. Make environmental physical changes according to disabilities
   1. ramps on side of sandbox for child to play
   2. materials in reach for child in a wheel chair
   3. trays on wheel chairs for them to use manipulatives
   4. areas large enough for wheel chairs/braces to fit

Rotating Items for More Inclusion

area at center	location (wing)	area at center	location (wing)
block area		**games/puzzles**	
lincoln logs	preschool	games	above blue line
table blocks	preschool	puzzles	on shelf
vehicles	attic/ps	(after introduction)	
little people	attic		
reading/writing		**dramatic**	
books	library/office	kitchen items (spice	home
foam alphabet	kind.	boxes)	attic
flannel letters/numbers	kind.	clothes	preschool
flannel people face	kind.	musical	home
parts	home	instruments	
letter/word stencils		scarves/dancing	
arts		**manipulatives**	
playdoh	make	connectors	attic
clay	cupboard	pipe works	attic
stencils	kind.	bending connectors	preschool
science/math		**large muscle**	
pan balance	above blue line	climber	preschool
magnets	office	balance beam	office
prism	office	hula hoops	kind.
exploring items	office/home	bowling/balls	kind.

Session Three Agenda
Designing a Better Dramatic Play Area

I. Designing a dramatic play area
   A. Why have a dramatic play area in preschool
   B. What benefits do children receive
   C. What are the developmental aspects practiced in dramatic play
II. Definitions of a prop box
   A. What it is, what it contains, how it facilitates play
   B. How to use it
   C. How to maintain it
III. Specifics for our school to build individual prop boxes
   A. Uniform box sizes
   B. Decide what subject each person wants to cover and what date each prop box will be ready
   C. Decide rules for use, maintenance, adding to it, who can use it, when, etc.
IV. Designing a dramatic play area for our particular setting
   A. There are two wings with two different needs
   B. What differences would you expect to find between the two dramatic play areas
   C. What strategies can help make a dramatic play area become usable for all in an inclusive setting
V. Deciding rules (staff and student) for maintaining a developmentally appropriate dramatic play
   A. What experiences are we trying to provide
   B. What materials should be included permanently, what rotated
   C. How can we keep it attractive, tidy
   D. Write rules for each wing and give to director
VI. Deadlines for having prop boxes ready to use in our school
   A. Sign-up sheet
      1. list subject matter for prop box
      2. list date you will have it prepared for classroom use

Session Four Agenda
Comparison of Two Developmental Theories
Differences in Theoretical Framework
between Special Education and Early Education

Part I: Overview of Social Learning Theory vs Cognitive-Stage Theory

Definition of a developmental theory: describes change over time in one or more areas of behavior or psychological activity, such as thought, language, social behavior, or perception.

No theory is complete. Each attempts to give a framework by which to explain behavior.

Social Learning Theory: (Generally Special Education)

1. Basic ideas
   a. The goal of psychology should be to predict and control overt behavior, not to describe and explain conscious states.
   b. Skinner: "A person does not act upon the world, the world acts upon him."
   c. Became big in the '50's...evolved from Watson and Skinner's Behaviorism (scientists who "conditioned" children)
   d. Bandura and others have adapted ideas to work in interactive settings
   e. Framework for most Special Education philosophies
2. How classic behaviorism works
   a. Examines one simple behavior at a time
   b. Behavior is generally based on stimulus-response (reward/punishment)
   c. Classical or operant conditioning
      i. classical conditioning begins with a reflex, an innate connection
      ii. operant conditioning-child learns a behavior that works (is reinforced)
      iii. Extinction-when a behavior disappears because of lack of reinforcement
   d. Role of the teacher is to increase certain behavior by reinforcing (making certain behaviors more likely to reoccur)
3. Terminology of modern social learning theory
   a. Abstract modeling-watching a soccer game and learning from it (learn by watching)

b. Vicarious reinforcement-seeing what happens to another child (you don't have to experience it personally)
c. Reciprocal determinism- a child's behavior "creates" an environment (circle of relationships theory proposed by Bandura)

4. Weaknesses of the theory
   a. Explains about performance more than cognitive development
   b. Seems manipulative
   c. Teacher and environment take away free choice and natural motivation

Cognitive-Stage Theory: (Generally Early Education)

1. Basic ideas
   a. Piaget: "Children 'construct' a memory from inferences based on their knowledge"
   b. Piaget: "If children have the knowledge necessary to understand the material, then they are likely to remember it without further ado"
   c. Developed in the first half of this century by Piaget, a biologist
      i. he set up experiments to see how individual children could solve them
      ii. based on how different age groups approached experiments, he constructed concepts of developmental stages
   d. Based on Piaget's work and experiments, Neo-Piagetians develop play curriculums for preschool and early elementary grades
   e. Framework for Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)
2. How classic constructivism works
   a. Child constructs knowledge through assimilation and accommodation
   b. Childhood development follows an invariant sequence of approximately 6 month intervals
      i. children are in periods of disequilibration, when they are struggling to figure out something (disjointed, fretful)
      ii. and equilibration, when they have figured out something new (calm, content)
   c. Children seek stimulation rather than try to escape it (as proposed by stimulus-response learning theory)
   d. "Wrong" or "cute notions that children have about the world are really symptoms of a complex intellectual system trying to understand reality
   e. To a large extent, children teach themselves (teachers are facilitators)
3. Terminology
   a. Constructive Play: Play that does not increase skill may be pleasurable, but it is not constructive
   b. Modeling is drill

c. Correspondences-figure out how something is similar or different from some more familiar event
d. Transformations-figure out how something similar or different got that way

4. Weaknesses of the theory
   a. Doesn't explain social interaction enough
   b. Doesn't cover motivation for many children
   c. Doesn't explain aberrant behavior or exceptional children

Part II: How We Can Combine Both Theories in our Inclusive Setting

1. We can set up our free play based on Constructivism
   a. Concentrate on what we are trying to accomplish (learning objective)
   b. Remember that children learn by doing
   c. Observe children to see what problems they may be trying to work out
      i. provide experiences in that area
      ii. allow children time to work out their own solutions when possible
2. We can use Social Learning Theory when natural motivations do not seem to work
   a. When a child is out of control, we can make the cause/effect more obvious
   b. We can observe the misbehaving child so that we provide experiences that will motivate the child to understand cause/effect more clearly ("if you cannot work this out, you will each have to play separately so we can complete our work over here")
   c. We can help children learn to problem-solve
      i. state the problem
      ii. solicit solutions
      iii. if none come, generate two or three and ask them to decide together
   d. With children who have disabilities, it may be necessary to make the cause/effect more obvious (perhaps that is why special educators sometimes seem harsh)

Session Five Agenda
Issues in Inclusion and Play

I. Variables in inclusion and play
   - A. Merely putting children together does not enhance skills
   - B. Children play with those most like themselves
     1. children with handicaps choose others with handicaps
     2. children without handicaps choose others without
   - C. Some variables in a social situation
     1. number and kinds of materials
     2. sex of children
     3. physical arrangement of space
     4. teacher involvement

II. Basic steps to social interactions
   - A. presence of 2 persons in relatively restricted area
   - B. parallel play or cooperative non-verbal play
   - C. verbal interactions

III. Teacher's role in integration
   - A. Teach social scripts
     1. teach for several days, about 15 minutes per day
     2. teach in triads
     3. teach each child all roles
     4. prompt when necessary
   - B. Manipulate the environment
     1. social vs isolate toys
     2. sociodramatic activities
     3. cooperative material limited in quantity
   - C. Combination of both enhancing the original framework and intervention works best (Smilansky)
   - D. Additional strategies
     1. divide into partners (two play best anyhow)
        - a. motor-gestural interactions more effective than verbal
        - b. target children respond in kind
        - c. affection more effective with females
        - d. highest response sometimes from children with lowest baseline
     2. teach following peer-mediated roles to chosen typical children
        - a. establish eye contact
        - b. describe play
        - c. initiate joint play
        - d. repeat, expand, or request clarification
     3. teacher assumes multiple roles
        - a. model, elicitor, organizer, planner

b. evaluator, supervisor
c. teach specific interventions
(1) manners such as please and thank you

IV. Generalizations concerning inclusion and play
A. teachers must plan and structure
B. teachers must understand developmental stages and task analysis
C. record keeping and assessments are crucial

Session Six Agenda
Reggio Emilia Project Approach

I. Beliefs at Reggio Emilia
   - A. School is a place of shared lives among adults and children
   - B. Construction is in motion/continuously adjusting itself
   - C. Reggio Emilia approach combines place, roles, functions that have their own timing, but that can be interchanged with one another to generate ideas and actions

II. The project approach
   - A. Choosing a project topic
     1. Concrete, close to personal experiences
     2. Interesting and important to children, rich in possibilities for varied activities
   - B. Exploration of topic
     1. Stimulating activity to get children to begin thinking, questioning
     2. At this time, children's reactions, questions, comments, ideas should be documented for use during the project
   - C. Organization of project
     1. Ideas and questions from the children are used to develop further activities
     2. Document the process through videos, drawings, photographs, constructions
   - D. Summary
     1. Culminating experience
     2. Comparison of initial ideas to compilation of concepts
     3. Evaluation with children and staff

III. Salient Issues in Reggio Emilia approach
   - A. Teacher takes lead from children's interests by making contact with child's highest level of thinking
   - B. Encourages group experiences
   - C. Integrates content and process
   - D. Allows for joy of learning to carry over into extended periods of time on different levels

IV. A Closer Look at a Project from Reggio Emilia: The Poppy Project
   - A. Description of the project
   - B. Description of how the teachers sustained and encouraged the children's interest
   - C. The integration of art and concept
   - D. Recognition of the need to sustain each child's spontaneous curiosity
     1. Preserve the decision to learn from children, events, families
     2. Maintain a readiness to change points of view

Session Seven Agenda
The Teacher's Role in Facilitating Sociodramatic Play

Types of Play Behavior

1. Functional (sensory-motor activity)
    - repeats actions
    - manipulations
    - imitations
    - practice of physical capabilities

2. Constructive (pre-conceived play focused around a sensory-motor activity)
    - personal joy and satisfaction of creating
    - ability of the child to build connections based on previously known concepts
    - recognition of the child as a creator

3. Dramatic (symbolic or pretend play)
    - expression of child's growing awareness of social surroundings
    - acts out "as if"
    - child is actor, observer, interactant
    - only type of play that is person-oriented, not materials-oriented

4. Games with rules (pre-arranged rules)
    - table games
    - physical

I. Overview: What is the value of sociodramatic play?
   A. Opportunities for children to develop social skills through:
      1. direct interaction within a carefully-planned environment.
      2. direct interaction with peers.
      3. direct interaction with adults.
   B. Opportunities for children to develop functional living skills.
   C. Opportunities for children to construct and expand upon their understand of services offered in the community.

II. The teacher-constructed sociodramatic play environment
   A. The physical environment should offer:
      1. safe, concrete, easy-to-manipulate structures and object which clearly represent real and familiar situations encountered in daily life.
      2. ample opportunities for children to construct their own knowledge through direct, child-initiated experiences in role-playing (and thus, symbolic play)
      3. labeled objects to help children begin to associated print with objects, and thus stimulate early literacy development.
      4. an appropriate quantity and variety of play objects which encourage children to:
         a. work together cooperatively, if developmentally ready.
         b. experiment independently through parallel play if limited
         c. social developmental levels so necessitate.
   B. Themed play situations should be based upon:
      1. topics which arouse children's curiosity, hold their interests, and have meaning for them.
      2. topics which allow for expansion and further exploration of ideas of which the children have some previous knowledge.
   C. Prop boxes, based upon relevant and appropriate themes, which:
      1. arouse interest and help children initiate sociodramatic play activities
      2. stimulate children's imagination and encourage them to creatively extend their play to more abstract levels.

III. The teacher's role in facilitating learning through sociodramatic play activities
   A. Goals, that is, desired skills to be learned should include:
      1. problem-solving through direct interaction with both the environment and peers.
      2. cooperative play skills.
      3. functional daily living skills, encountered in real life.
      4. knowledge about necessary community services.

5. understanding the many roles people play: at home, at work, and in leisure environments.
6. the development of early literacy skills:
   a. the association between printed words and objects.
   b. the understanding that letters are grouped to form words, and that words have meaning.
   c. a developing interest in books.
   d. the abilities to verbally communicate by discussing play activities.
7. the development of math readiness skills, such as:
   a. one-to-one correspondence with objects
   b. sequencing the order of events (also a literacy skill).

B. Knowledge of when and when not to intervene should include:
1. intervening to:
   a. help children extend play activities.
   b. help children play cooperatively.
   c. help children resolve conflicts.
2. not intervening when:
   a. children appropriately and creatively construct their own symbolic play activities.
   b. children play together cooperatively.
3. teacher's role when not intervening:
   a. maintain low profile and observe behavior.
   b. periodically document findings for developmental assessment through
      (1) written notes
      (2) audiotaped recordings
      (3) through videotaped recording

IV. Examples of activity themes for sociodramatic play
A. laundromat
B. repair shop
C. puppetry
D. creative play with boxes
E. other topics based upon the interests and real life situations in the children's environment.

V. Conclusion: necessary elements of a successful sociodramatic play program
A. carefully-planned, teacher-constructed play environment.
B. safe, theme-based curiosity-arousing props or structures which invite children to play and explore.
C. an appropriate selection and quantity of objects to foster the learning of play skills at various developmental levels.
D. insight and flexibility of the teacher to know when and when not to intervene with children's play activities.

To Intervene or Not to Intervene with Children's Play: That is the Question!

DO INTERVENE WHEN:

the children appear unable to resolve their own conflicts through discussion or acceptable actions

a child's safety appear to be endangered.

a child becomes bored or frustrated with the activity.

a child appears to be unsure of appropriate ways to use available space or materials.

by doing so, use of expressive language can be extended.

by doing so, play skills or creativity can be extended.

the child's discovery of additional knowledge can be fostered.

DO NOT INTERVENE WHEN:

children are using space and play materials appropriately and creatively.

children are playing together cooperatively.

children are constructing their own play and discovering their own knowledge.

children are staying on-task until completion.

children are communicating their understanding of relevant concepts.

WHAT TO DO WHEN NOT INTERVENING:

observe behavior.

periodically document findings for developmental assessments
- -through written notes documenting exact occurrences.
- -through audiotapes.
- -through videotapes.
- -through keeping papers for their portfolios.
- -through using the Smilansky scale.

Session Eight Agenda

The Evolution of Teaching: Comparison of Special and Regular Educators (3 Decades)

DATES	REGULAR EDUCATION	SPECIAL EDUCATION
1960's	Behavioristic view of teaching (based on Skinner's research) "Assembly-Line Industrial Age" teaching. Children were expected to "fit the mold". Those who did not were removed from the regular education program.	Behavioristic model also prevailed here. Children who did not "fit the mold" were placed in special self-contained or resource classes for the handicapped. Those most severely involved were institutionalized.
1970's	The "open classroom" concept took hold. Children with learning difficulties could not handle the additional distractions in the regular classrooms. Enrichment subjects were overemphasized, and basic skill teaching was weakened.	Resource programs became more popular. More and more children were labeled "L.D." (learning disabled). L.D. children, as well as other special needs children, were not socially accepted by peers. Little was done to help these children socially (also 94-142).
1980's	The "Back to Basic" movement began. Also, mainstreaming was introduced. Mildly handicapped children now attended regular sessions in music, art, P.E., recess, and lunch (but rarely in academics).	Resource teachers were becoming a "dumping ground" for "presumed" L.D. children-any child not "fitting the mold". Later 80's, began to focus on more hands-on, experiential teaching-also lean toward more integrating with regular education. (amendment to act 94-142).
1990's	De[illegible]opmentally appropriate classes int[illegible]duced (DAP). Constructivism (from Piaget) and whole language curriculums come into play. Computers-more heavily emphasized. Basic skills emphasized-but enrichment classes still taught. De-emphasis upon grades. Alternative forms of assessment tried. More holistic attitudes. Parents & community more directly involved with education. Special needs children more accepted-leaning toward full inclusion.	Special education teachers taking on more roles as: itinerant, consultant, coordinator with parents, community, etc. Special educators now involved in team-teaching with regular education teachers. R.E.I.=regular education initiative

Session Nine Agenda
Addressing the Value of Play to Families

I. What is adult role in play (for parents and staff)
   - A. to understand that children learn through play
   - B. to know when to facilitate play
   - C. to allow plenty of time for children to play

II. Ways our staff can help parents understand how children learn through play
   - A. videotape the school and send tapes home
   - B. talk to parents when they arrive and pick up children
   - C. encourage parents to visit school during play
   - D. have meetings where children and parents play, with guided instruction
   - E. talk about play at orientation and meetings, talk about developmental aspects for them to expect and to facilitate
   - F. send home written suggestions for play at home (notes and articles)
   - G. use parties such as our October Dress-up to help parents appreciate play
   - H. send home stories children have written
   - I. fill the environment with evidence that enriching play is happening
   - J. help parents decide what toys are appropriate (peace-making toys)
   - K. help foster an attitude of playfulness (discovery, curiosity, delight)
   - L. help parents think of children as scientists, discoverers, athletes, etc.
   - M. help parents applaud children's efforts

Session Ten Agenda
Play Assessments

I. Why do play assessments
   - A. We need accurate knowledge of the developmental stages of children in order to help challenge them to the next step
   - B. We need accurate knowledge of the developmental stages of children so that we can provide a consistent program with the IU staff and with each other
   - C. We need accurate knowledge of the developmental stage of specific children in order to meet IEP's

II. What are basic examples of acceptable play assessments
   - A. videotaping (then using a written criteria)
   - B. audiotaping (transcribing, then using a written criteria)
   - C. photographs of children at work and closeups of their work
   - D. checklists
   - E. portfolio (work samples)
   - F. rating scales (such as Smilansky scale)

III. Our use of play assessments
   - A. Work on elaboration of our semester assessments to include more play
   - B. Learn to do at least one quality type of assessment
   - C. Gradually add several types of play assessments to our staff repertoire

APPENDIX E

POSITION PAPER ON PLAY

Position Paper on Play Worksheet

How do children learn?

What is the definition of play?

What characteristics does play have?

What skills does play help to develop in the child?

What is the role of play objects (toys, materials, etc)?

How do children develop social skills?

What is the role of the adult (teacher/parent) in play?

What additional help might children with special needs require in order to participate in play?

The Significance of Play
A position paper

We believe that young children learn best through active participation in the exploration of their environment. Personal experiences help children develop new concepts, either by building upon prior knowledge, or by slightly changing their perceptions of how the world works. Such experiences often occur during play activities. Key factors in successful play experiences are the following:

1. the purpose for the child's interest in the activity based on the recollection and association with a previous experience
2. the arousal of the child's curiosity
3. the captivation of the child's attention
4. the stimulation of further challenge to encourage the child's willingness to extend the scope of the activity
5. the absence of fear of failure
6. the influence of fun as a vehicle to encourage future voluntary repetitions of the activity

Social play involves two or more children engaged in some interaction. Socio-dramatic play involves children pretending together. Children can pretend only what they can imagine or envision mentally. Building fairly accurate mental images is an important part of childhood. Role-playing helps a child to build a structural framework for real life situations.

Toys are tools that help children play. They need not be expensive or fancy. In fact, the more abstract a tool may be (such as a cardboard box or paper towel cylinder), the more stimulation the child's imagination will be extended during the learning process.

Quality play activities help children develop language and cognitive skills, as well as social skills, problem-solving techniques, and above all, self-esteem. All of these skills contribute toward the development of the "whole" child, and promote positive personal qualities necessary for survival in the adult world.

Good play activities yield other benefits. Good play is refreshing and engaging. Play serves as an on-going means for children to satisfy their natural curiosity about the world through experimentation. Furthermore, play helps children gradually comprehend the difference between fantasy and reality.

The best play usually does not happen by accident. The adult must adopt a sensitive role in children's play. The adult, through careful observation, can perceive the child's need for help in order to continue experimentation. The timing of the intervention is crucial. If the adult interferes too quickly, the child

may lose interest in the activity. If the adult waits too long, the child may become overwhelmed and discouraged. A carefully-attuned adult can assist a child in extending the play activity by initiating open-ended discussions leading to the continuation of positive, failure-free play. The adult's role as a positive model is crucial in influencing children's play, since it incorporates the imitation of both adults and peers.

Furthermore, in a group learning situation, the teacher must be able to provide a range of materials and experiences to accommodate a wide variety of interests and abilities. The teacher, by example, must help children appreciate individual differences in one another. The daily schedule must be prioritized to allow enough time for play to develop and to be sustained. The room arrangement must be carefully prepared to provide for a variety of potential fun to be sustained. The best teachers are flexible enough to see the opportunities for new play to develop by following the suggestions and ideas of children as they unfold. Finally, the teacher must be able to accurately assess developmental play stages in order to provide a continuum of challenging experiences for children as they mature.

APPENDIX F
CHECKLIST FOR PLAY ASSESSMENTS

Checklist for Play Assessments

Teacher	Assessment Used	received personal training in usage	understood terminology	demonstrated ability to use in classroom
teacher #1	Smilansky Scale			
teacher #2	Smilansky Scale			
teacher #3	Smilansky Scale			
teacher #4	Smilansky Scale			
teacher #5	Smilansky Scale			
teacher #6	Smilansky Scale			
teacher #7	Smilansky Scale			
teacher #8	Smilansky Scale			